COMPETITION GENERAL RESEARCH
FUND FY 2015

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PROJECT TITLE: Undergraduates Speak: Our Rights and Access

STATUS:  ☒ New    ☐ Renewal/Continuation (Special justification must be attached)

KEY WORDS (Provide up to 50 characters maximum that describes your project in disciplinary, subdisciplinary terms.) scholarly communications, information literacy, learning, higher education, copyright, open access, group research, interviews, focus groups
Appendix A:
Summary of Research Objectives

We are seeking $3,510 for our research project, Undergraduates Speak: Our Rights and Access, to cover student salaries associated with research that investigates the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of undergraduate students at the University of Kansas on copyright and access issues. The research will form the basis of an article to be shared with librarians and educators worldwide. This project will capture undergraduate perspectives about scholarly communication through focus groups and interviews. The results of this research will be used to increase awareness among undergraduates about access to information and scholarly communication.

A recent white paper on the intersections between scholarly communications and information literacy\(^1\) describes the need for libraries to strengthen connections between these two critical areas of library outreach in higher education. The new Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,\(^2\) which recommends a conceptual approach to information literacy, identifies undergraduate students as key, though frequently overlooked, contributors to these conversations. There is a lack of literature on how librarians have engaged with undergraduates on these issues, and even fewer examples of the successful blending of information literacy and scholarly communications programming on university campuses. This research will allow KU Libraries to collect data on undergraduate experiences and perceptions via individual and focus group interviews.

Michelle Reed, Undergraduate Learning Specialist, will provide leadership on this research. As a member of the KU Libraries Scholarly Communications Cross-Functional Initiative (CFI), which is led by Laura Ada Emmett, the Information Literacy Integration CFI, and the Center for Undergraduate Initiatives and Engagement, Michelle is well positioned to conduct this study and integrate the resulting scholarship into meaningful conversations with stakeholders across campus. Please see Appendix E for Michelle’s curriculum vitae.

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Appendix B:
Research Plan, Supporting Data, and Timeline

Research Significance

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) published a white paper in 2013 on the intersections between scholarly communications and information literacy, which expresses the need for libraries to strengthen connections between these two critical areas of library outreach in higher education. Additionally, in February 2015, ACRL’s Board of Directors filed the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, which promotes a conceptual approach to information literacy and has the potential to transform current approaches to library instruction. The framework presents six frames, including “Information Has Value,” which will be the focal point of this research project, and is heavily influenced by conversations on metaliteracy and metacognition, which requires that students actively practice self-reflection as they journey toward a greater understanding of our information ecosystem. Conversations about how to implement the framework in our home institutions are just beginning.

Our proposed research project, Undergraduates Speak: Our Rights and Access, investigates the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of undergraduate students at the University of Kansas (KU) on copyright and access issues. It will be among the first national examples of how the framework can be used to inform curriculum design. As such, it may be a viable contender for prestigious awards (e.g., ACRL Instruction Section (IS) Innovation Award) and/or external funding for continued research.

The project supports Goal 1 of Bold Aspirations, the strategic plan for KU: “Strengthen recruitment, teaching, and mentoring to prepare undergraduate students for lifelong learning, leadership, and success.”

Anecdotal evidence suggests that undergraduate students are more aware of copyright and access issues than expected, though this knowledge does not seem to significantly impact behavior, especially as it relates to the creation and licensing of their own work. Undergraduates Speak: Our Rights and Access seeks to understand undergraduate perspectives on these issues and has the potential to serve as a powerful example of a blended, peer-to-peer educational strategy that promotes, through example and content, the open sharing of scholarly resources.

Research/Creative Plan

Successful completion of the project will require student salaries for a team of two undergraduate students for the duration of 15 weeks, with each student working 9 hours per week, between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016. The skill set required to complete this task in the defined timeframe is broader than what one should expect from a single applicant; therefore, a minimum of two students is required. The recommended rate of compensation is $12.50 per hour.

Under the tutelage of Michelle Reed, and with additional support from an interdisciplinary group of faculty advisors (to be determined by successful applicants during the application process), the student team will identify individuals for one-on-one and focus groups interviews, design
interview questions, determine confidentiality and consent requirements, and draft consent forms.

Following the building phase of this research, we will contact the Human Subjects Committee once again to determine if further approval is required before moving the next phase of research. The student team and its leadership will then recruit participants, conduct interviews, and analyze the resulting data.

**Primary Goal**

- Accurately capture KU undergraduate experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding copyright and access issues.

**Immediate Outcomes**

- To increase library personnel’s understanding of undergraduate students’ awareness and perceptions of copyright and access laws, policies, and implications.

**Timeline**

Phase 1: July – August 2015
- Research and project planning (building phase)

Phase 2: September – December 2015
- Individual and focus group interviews

**Long-Term Potential**

Though outside of the scope defined by this timeline, this research provides the foundation for continued research in the following areas:

- Peer learning
- Blended learning
- Open educational resources (OER)
- Plagiarism and academic integrity
- Experiential learning

Next steps following completion of the first two phases described above include identifying avenues for integrating project results into undergraduate pilot programs on campus; engaging faculty, staff, and graduate students in conversations about undergraduate perspectives on complex scholarly communications issues; and presenting and publishing research findings among a broad, interdisciplinary audience. The areas listed above, as well as others, will be taken into consideration as we move forward with this project.